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ABSTRACT

Identity formation among Haitian immigrants to the United States is explored in an effort to pinpoint the macro (external) and micro (internal) factors that shape the cultural identity of this particular immigrant community. The immigration experience that is revealed is one of a cultural and linguistic identity in transition. Part I presents a sociological portrait of the Haitian immigrants and looks at the processes of the formation of their identity as a distinct black ethnic group. It discusses the parameters of Haitian identity and considers Haitian immigrant distancing behavior in terms of the hierarchical and separatist structure of American society. The second part of the book sketches a sociolinguistic portrait and considers language maintenance, use, choice, and attitudes. New York (New York) was chosen as the research site because it is the urban center with the largest concentration of Haitians in the United States. The bulk of the information was gathered through 70 individual interviews with first-generation urban adult immigrants from differing economic backgrounds. Group interviews added the views of about 50 more immigrants. Chapters are titled: (1) "Haitians in New York City"; (2) "Premigration Experiences of Haitian Immigrants"; (3) "Emergence and Essence of Haitian Immigrant Ethnicity"; (4) "Haitians' Responses to African Americans"; (5) "Language and Ethnicity in the Haitian Immigrant Context"; (6) "Patterns of Language Use of Haitian Immigrants"; and (7) "Haitians, American Cultural Pluralism, and Black Ethnics." The interview protocol is attached. (Contains 2 tables, 4 maps, and 209 references.) (SLD)

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